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Review

A TRIP TO KOREA

In the Series "Trips Abroad" by
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CHAPTER I.

AN INVITATION TO KOREA.

Did you ever visit anyone who didn't want you to come? Well, that is what I am going to ask you to do. To go to a country whose people have cut down every pretty thing on their shores, so that strangers would not be tempted to stop there. Until a few years ago, we did not receive invitations to visit Korea, even though our very own cousins lived there. Now they have heard a little about Jesus and they are hungry for more.

You will want to know what to pack in your trunk, so I must tell you something of the climate. They have three months' sunshine, then comes the rain and at last the great, great rain by buckets full. A delightful place to plan picnics, for you can be sure of a clear day, but also a good place for disease, ague, chills, fever and consumption. So you must pack warm clothing, umbrella, gum boots and rain-coat. Another thing of which you had better have a supply, is candy. You won't find any in Korea. Children there love sour things, pickles, peppery sauces, relishes, catsups, spicy preserves, etc. Perhaps this, and the fact that Koreans raise so much grain, account for the people's strength.

You are not easily frightened, I hope? Koreans tell great stories of the typhoons and water dragons that inhabit the China Sea. But you remember the ridiculous things folks told Columbus when he first came to America and yet he arrived home safely. We shall travel secure from danger, too.

Our baggage, even if it weighs five hundred pounds, will be carried by a coolie with little arms but strong back. We pay for our transportation with what Koreans call, "blind money," because it has no holes or "eyes" in it. It used to take six horses to carry one hundred dollars of their money, it was so big. There are no rich men in Korea, even though the Heavenly Father has hidden away much treasure there. The spirits have locked away the gold and silver in the mountains and keep the people from getting rich. We are helping them get the gold away from the spirits, by showing them how to develop the mines.

We call Korea "the quiet land," because it has no stone pavements, there are no carts rumbling along and the roads wander where they please. Korea should have an "Arbor Day Celebration," to teach her the value of trees, so many are destroyed yearly. But she needs another lesson more. "Every man, woman and child there smokes tobacco." Isn't that dreadful? Our bodies, we are told, are "the temples of the living God," and to think, they are stained and hurt just by an evil habit? Hadn't we better tell our little cousins about the wrong they are doing? Perhaps you know some boys over here in America, who know better, and yet they smoke, too. We had better tell them first.

Now go home and say good-bye to the folks who can't go with us, for next week we shall be in Korea. But don't forget to ask the Heavenly Father to bless our trip.

CHAPTER II.

A KOREAN HOME.

If you were building a house in America, to-day, how would you go about it? How would you heat it? Let us compare it with a Korean house. The walls are made of cornstalks and twine, plastered with brown clay and papered in white. The floor is stone, covered with mud; the carpet, oiled paper and reed mats. The furnace is a pit dug in the ground; the fuel, grass, weeds and branches. There is poor ventilation, only paper windows, tightly closed.

We enter by the woodshed, leaving our shoes outside. The boys will have to stay in the guest room with the men.

We shall find a warm welcome for Koreans are very hospitable. No introductions are needed, the door is always on the latch. Here are gentlemen of leisure, tramps, fortune tellers, priests, venders—in fact, everybody. There is no privacy. You must expect your letters to be read, your private business asked and to be watched all the time. Our cousins certainly need to learn the lesson of polite consideration for others.

If we need money, we can borrow all we want, if our host has it. We shall have to pay heavy interest, although we shall never be reminded of our indebtedness. Debt is very common. "They are not misers but spendthrifts, nothing pleasing them better than to loan to a friend." Wealth brings a great responsibility but debt is a heavy burden.

We shall be pressed to stay for dinner. The table is only a foot high and two feet square, so we shall have to sit Turkish fashion on the floor. The dinner is not very appetizing at first, the garlic odor is so prominent, the chicken's head is left in the soup and everybody makes such a noise while eating. Mother would feel dreadfully if her dinner table was like that. Only the men are seated, no blessing is asked, and there is no conversation.

The girls had better leave the men folks and visit the women in the kitchen. Notice the dark, dingy, windowless room with its low ceiling and filled with steam and smoke. Hear the harsh, disagreeable tone of the mother, scolding her son's wife, who may just have come in from the fields. Can you imagine mother having to work like that?

The clothes are washed in the streams even in winter, and beaten until they are white. Then they are wrapped around wood and a dipper of hot coals passed over them to dry them. All clothes are ripped entirely before washing and they must be sewed together again.

There is very little cleaning done. The dishes are none too well washed. The garbage is never collected but thrown into a refuse heap at the front gate until the birds and rain clear it away. The odor is dreadful and disease results, of course. Koreans don't mind. They are used to it. Ask mother how she would like such housekeeping. Do you know where the trouble lies?

The women have too much to do, they are untrained

and incapable, and they are not loved or respected. Jesus has taught us long ago to love mother and sisters and no respectable boy or man to-day sits by and allows a woman to lift heavy things or to take unnecessary steps. Ask Jesus to-night to help us tell our Korean cousins how to keep house and how to treat women.

CHAPTER III.

OUR COUSINS.

Since we have visited the Korean home and become acquainted with the mother and father, we ought to learn to know our cousins, too. Notice his dress as he comes toward us. It is very much like his father's costume, only very much gayer in color. Sometimes he wears very little clothing at all. Even in winter children run out with nothing on but shoes. Now he wears heavy, padded stockings with shoes made of twine, a long outer robe, an inner coat and pantaloons, held in place by an embroidered belt. Look at the enormous quantity of material needed and think of the heavy laundry work. It is very clean, even the poor are particular about that. They often only have one suit and have to wash it every night. Aren't you glad they are tidy in dress at least? We have such a respect for ourselves if we are clean. No matter how poor the dress if it is clean and mended, it looks well.

Our little cousin says that he wants to play with us. I wonder what games he knows that we do. Pin wheels, hide and seek, blind man's buff and cat's cradle are familiar ones. See how he plays kite! The kite strings are cut with a fine cord smeared with paste and mixed with pulverized glass. His big brother will take us to a stone fight instead of baseball. But I don't believe you will enjoy that, for so many people are killed. Don't you think we are responsible to the Heavenly Father for preserving our lives? There are so many pleasures in Korea of which He would not approve. Almost everybody gambles. Why is that wrong? Do you know?

Perhaps our cousin will take us to school with him. There will be plenty to interest us there. What a noisy, noisy place! What would be done to us Americans if we shouted out our lessons so? How would you like to write in sand

with a stick instead of pen and ink? And yet with such poor teaching in the schools, the national examinations are hard to pass. What are we Christians doing to improve the schools? Wherever Christianity goes, with it goes education. God expects us to develop our minds as well as our bodies.

Why don't the girls go to school, too, and why did the boys treat the girls so rudely while we were playing games? Because they think that girls have no souls and will never go to Heaven. We know better, don't we?

Wouldn't you like to go to a wedding in this new Country? I will tell you about one. You know in Bible times no lady could choose her own husband. Her father did that for her. It is the same over there in Korea. Ladies cannot choose the one they love for themselves. A man or woman, called a "go between," arranges it all, and often there is cheating done. The girl is told that her future husband is rich, young and handsome, and on her wedding day, when it is too late, she finds that he is old and wrinkled and poor. She rides in a pretty road chair carried by coolies and covered with a beautiful tiger skin. There is a great feast and the wedding is over. What a difference between our wedding and theirs?

Their funerals are different, too. You see they do not know that death to the Christian is only falling asleep and awaking in Heaven. There is much drunkenness at a heathen burial and people called "professional mourners" are paid to come and cry with a loud noise.

Oh, I am so glad that we live in American homes and have Christian parents, so glad we have the advantage of good schools and happy childhood and womanhood. Best of all, we have the knowledge of the Christ who rejoices in our joys and weeps with us in our sorrows. Don't you wish Korea knew about Him? Can't we help tell them some way?

CHAPTER IV.

DEMON SPIRITS.

Do you love stories of goblins? If you do, listen to this one. Long ago, and even now in Korea, people say, naughty spirits wander about the cities, prying into every room of the

houses. They live in the churches, walk in the streets, and hide in the hills, rivers, trees and diseases, too. Everywhere and at every time are they present. Seldom are they good to men but always bring trouble, sorrow and disaster. Some say, they steal graves because they are put in the wrong places. Others tell of houses that have had to be torn down because so much trouble came to the people who had selected the site. Some spirits are always up to mischief, flying over kitchens, knocking down pans and kettles, stealing the good man's top-knot and flying away with it. The good spirits, who are a little like our angels, live in the highest mountains and have the jolliest times. They allow mortals, who are good, to come and live with them.

When folks move in Korea, they do not take their old gods with them; they have a new set. For this reason, they are careful to know to whom to pray when in trouble.

Isn't that silly, you say? Yes, and yet do you know there are folks in America who carry a Bible, a bag of salt and a loaf of bread into the new house the first thing, so they may never want. Which is worse? They believe in luck, too, which is so foolish when we have the loving Heavenly Father to care for us. At the New Year they make straw manikins stuffed with money and throw them into the street to dispel the ill luck. They hang a hat and coat at the door to please the door spirit. Some hang up old shoes, bunches of grass, fish heads, etc., as household gods.

There are witches and wizards who are supposed to be friendly with the spirits and who perform ceremonies to appease them and drive out disease. If you pay the witch three or four dollars, she will pray for you. She then sits down, scrapes a basket, begins to dance and talk as a spirit. Then she pretends to hear the right cure, eats the food for the spirit and departs. What would our doctors think of such methods? How does the Saviour feel when He sees His children afraid, sick and helpless and no one to tell them He is near. No one to tell them He loves and pities and is longing to help. What will He say to us some day when we knew about Him and selfishly kept the news to ourselves? Let us resolve, to-day, to at least pray for our Korean cousins and to send some one to tell the good news.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOOD NEWS IN KOREA.

We all love to receive letter from friends. We read them over and over and treasure them. The Bible is a letter from the dearest of all friends, our Heavenly Father and yet some of us have never read it through or even know where our own is. In Korea, there are many who make great sacrifices to hear the Gospel story, walking many miles to hear it. Then when they learn to know Jesus what a change it makes in their lives! How much more beautiful are their homes, at last the women have a chance and what comfort they have in trouble! But the sacrifice is not over. How do your friends, teachers and pastor receive the news of your acceptance of Christ? What does mother say when you tell her? It is the sweetest, happiest time in all your life. If you were a child in Korea, there would be no rejoicing, only bitter hard feelings toward you. Perhaps you would lose your life for the Master's sake. At best you would lose many of your old friends and would have to leave home.

Did you know that it was a doctor who first took the story of Jesus to Korea? Ask your teacher to tell you the story of Dr. Allen and the king's nephew. Oh, there are so many stories for you to read about Korea. I can only tell you the names of some and where to find them. A little book, "Korea for the Sunday School," has several. Miss Minerva Guthapel, a lady who had been living in Korea telling the Bible story was hurt there and had to come home. She has written two dear little stories, "The Happiest Girl in Korea," and "For Love's Sweet Sake." The 1909 Fall Edition of Field Dispatches has another, "Story of Sin Pao."

I promised to tell you where to get these stories. There is a Board of Foreign Missions for your church, a band of men whose business it is to know all about the different countries and their needs, just where to send the missionaries and how best to spend the money we send them. If you write to them they will be glad to tell you all they know.

Although many people in Korea now have heard of Jesus, there are many hundreds yet who do not know Him and still are living in dread, fear and unhappiness. We, in

America, might have been living in just such darkness if the Heavenly Father had not given us loving parents and ancestors who knew and loved Christ.

Don't you want to make a list for me of all the blessings we have in America that Korea has not? What a very long one it will be! It doesn't seem fair, does it, that we should have so much, and they so little when they deserve it just as well? Do you know what they did as soon as they heard the good news? They went straight over to tell their neighbors on the Island of Quelpart. Oughtn't that to be a lesson to us?

Their church has grown marvelously. The places of worship are crowded, many having to go away because of lack of room. They are so eager to hear, if only there were more people to tell them and more churches to which to go. Couldn't we help some way? We might share what money we have with them. Some little folks I know are giving two cents each week and you wouldn't believe how much they have done already. Of course each of us will give something even if it is little. We can all pray for them each night and ask the Heavenly Father to hasten the time when all shall know Him. Koreans sometimes spend all night in prayer as Jesus did. I wonder how many people over here talk to God many minutes at a time! That is what makes beautiful Christians over there, they love to read their Bibles and to pray.

The greatest gift we could possibly give is—ourselves. When we are planning to make the most of our lives, we can do nothing better than to be a missionary. Korea needs ministers, teachers, doctors, and nurses far more than America does, and the Saviour's command is, "Go into all the world and preach my Gospel."

Here we are! Back home again after our trip! Aren't you glad we went and won't we have a great deal to tell our friends? "Good bye," I hope we can take another trip together some time soon.

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